



# A Case for Accreditation of Project Managers

*All too often we hear about projects getting into difficulties. Budget overruns, unable to complete project on schedule, shoddy workmanship or inferior materials, and maintenance problems are not uncommon complaints. While we do not expect a perfect project, such difficulties are result of lack, if not absence, of good project management.*

## What is project management?

It is a discipline or skill set that applies a set of methodology and techniques to deliver a specific project from initiation/conception and planning to execution and ultimate completion. Good project management is not simply a matter of putting together a schedule and cost plan, and sticking to it regimentally. We operate in a fast-pace and changing business environment, projects are normally exposed to uncertainties and risks. Project Managers are expected to have the confidence to deal with these factors and have the ability to plan meticulously. It requires a good lot of leadership and organizational skills to handle this, as well as great planning and communication skills. Management of projects requires a smooth and calculated approach that constantly holds a holistic perspective of the project objective but at the same time requires meticulous attention to break down the task into manageable parts and pieces that people in the team can address and the finesse to manage people involved in delivering the outcome.

**There is a need to have industry standard stipulated for the practice and provision of good professional project management service in Singapore.**

Currently, any person can call himself a Project Manager (PM) and practise project management in the Built Environment/Construction Industry. Unlike the practices of Architects and Professional Engineers, the professional practice of PMs is not legislated. Developers and consumers of project management service find the quality and standard of Project



Management service vary widely. Some developers questioned why their consultants or contractors claimed that their design and supervision service included project management and yet found that their projects ran into delays, with cost overrun or laden with poor quality or defective works. There is a need to have industry standard stipulated for the practice and provision of good professional project management service in Singapore. We need a system for the consumers of Project Management service to sieve out or differentiate the good PMs from the mediocre. The Society of Project Managers (SPM) is leading the way in developing an accreditation scheme to assess and certify qualified practitioners in Project Management.

## What is expected of a good project manager?

Can we assume that those who call themselves PMs have the basic knowledge and skill set required for project management. Do they know and use the principles of project management, adopt the best practices - use suitable Project Management tools, templates? Do they have some type of project management training?

Project managers in the build environment industry (BEI) in Singapore are expected to be conversant with the development in technology and

methodology to improve productivity, to encourage environmental sustainability, to adopt good work place safety practice, and have some degree of understanding of the technical aspects to help developer/owners achieve better maintainability in their buildings, for better life cycle outcome.

Are we expecting a good PM to be a modern day Renaissance man who is master of all trades and disciplines? No, but a good PM is expected to have sufficient knowledge of each discipline that he is managing to enable him to interact intelligently with the consultant of that discipline. I reckon a good PM is like a good orchestra conductor who knows the characteristics of the various instruments in his team of musicians. His skills and expertise are not just to coordinate, but really to integrate the sounds of the instruments in good timing, tempo and intensity to create a beautiful melody, and not noise. So, a good PM is expected to have the skills to integrate the contributions of the various and varied consultants (or trades of sub-contractors, in the case of a contractor's PM) in his project team with good leadership and management skills.

Now, how does a conductor reach maestro standard? It cannot be just by reading books and musical scores and attending concerts, can he?

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Similarly, how can a PM become a PM of high competence? While he can start by reading books on Project Management and watching how others manage project, but that is not enough. He can attend appropriate training to "knowledge up" and to limited extent "skill up", but really he must "get into the water" to experience it. He needs to gain the experience of managing more complex projects to gain higher competence.

It is unlikely that the practice of Project Management will be legislated, although that would be an easier approach. Accreditation of PMs will certainly expand and improve knowledge and experience of managers of projects and provide for continual professional education and development. With these, it will help raise project management practice standard in the industry. With accreditation, the

qualified PMs can obtain internationally recognised certificate acknowledging their competence in Project Management. Accreditation of PMs will increase certainty to the customers that they will receive competent and professional services from the PM and enable project management services companies to demonstrate clearly the professional competencies of their employees. The built environment industry can see more successful projects delivered with higher productivity, better safety record and greener and more sustainable facilities. 🏡

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### Major Completed Projects

Austville @ Sengkang • Ascentia Sky @ Alexandra Rd • UE BizHub East @ Changi Business Park Ave 1 • The Rochester @ North Buona Vista, Rochester Park • A&A Existing Factory @ 2 Gul St 4 • Paterson Suites @ Paterson Rd • The Riverina @ Kallang Road • One Jervois @ Jervois Close • Boon Lay MRT Extension • Sembawang Shopping Centre • Calrose Garden @ Ang Mo Kio Avenue 4 / Yio Chu Kang Road • Visioncrest @ Oxley Rise / Clemenceau Avenue • Quinterra @ Holland Road • Vertis @ Amber Gardens • The Infiniti @ West Coast Park • Tan Chin Tuan Mansion @ Cairnhill • UE Print Media Hub • Kovan Melody @ Kovan Road • IMCB @ NUS • Fusionpolis @ Ayer Rajah Avenue • The Callista & The Elysia @ Mar Thoma Rd • The Paterson @ Paterson Rd • The Light @ Cairnhill • The Serenade @ Mt Sinai • St Ignatius Church @ 120 Kings Road • Nee Soon Camp • Singapore Island Country Club • Biopolis (Substructure) • Telecommunication Complex @ 38 Kim Chuan Road • Changi Business Park Vista For AMSEA Pte Ltd • The Horizon @ Holt Road • Camelot Condominium @ Tanjong Rhu • Institute of Health & National Dental • ITE HQ & Technical Institute • Raffles Town Club

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